UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1995/626
26 July 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 27 JULY 1995 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached biannual report addressed to me on 17 July 1995 by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.

I should be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

95-22566 (E) 280795 310795

Annex

Biannual report of the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee on the activities of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia was established in August 1992, to remain in being until a settlement of the problems of the former Yugoslavia had been achieved. Its seat is at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Co-Chairmen of the Conference are the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Head of State or Government of the Presidency of the European Union. The activities of the Conference are supervised by a Steering Committee co-chaired by representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Presidency of the European Union. The current Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee are Mr. Carl Bildt (European Union) and Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg (United Nations). Mr. Bildt replaced Lord Owen on 13 June 1995. The day-to-day activities of the Conference are carried out by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee and in working groups and task forces.

2. Information on the activities of the Conference from January to June 1995 is provided below.

II. STEERING COMMITTEE

3. Meetings of the Steering Committee of the Conference were held on 31 January, 10 March and 13 June. Issues discussed included reports by the Co-Chairmen and International Conference negotiators; review of developments; humanitarian issues; and budgetary matters.

III. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

4. As regards the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the past six months, the activities of the International Conference have had three major objectives in view: to generate international humanitarian assistance; to promote acceptance by the Bosnian Serb leadership of the Contact Group plan; and to support the activities of the International Conference Mission monitoring the closure of the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to the Bosnian Serbs.

5. The provision of international humanitarian assistance is dealt with in section V below. As regards promotion of acceptance by the Bosnian Serb leadership of the Contact Group plan, the Co-Chairmen and International Conference personnel have participated in, and supported, the activities of the Contact Group, both at the technical level and at the political level.

6. On 23 March, Mr. Stoltenberg and Lord Owen met the Bosnian Serb leadership, including Mr. Karadzic, Mr. Krajisnik, Mr. Koljevic and Mr. Buha, in Zvornik.

The Bosnian Serb leadership said it was not prepared to accept any formulation that contained the words "acceptance of the peace plan". After discussion, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said that he would respond to an exchange of letters in the following terms:

A

"Dear Dr. Karadzic,

"We are writing to you to summarize our discussions today on the way ahead over the next few months. Negotiations with the aim of achieving a comprehensive settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of equitable and balanced arrangements will resume in early April.

"These negotiations, which will be conducted by the Contact Group, will be on the basis of the peace plan of the Contact Group as a starting point leading to a comprehensive peace settlement, and will last for two months. It will be necessary for discussions to be held involving the parties to ensure an extension of the cessation of hostilities agreement to cover these negotiations.

..."

B

"Excellencies,

"Thank you for your letter, of which we have taken note. We accept the basis for negotiations proposed by the Contact Group as explained in your letter of 23 March 1995.

"We are ready to discuss an extension of the cessation-of-hostilities agreement to cover these negotiations.

..."

Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg undertook to pass the above-mentioned texts to the Contact Group and subsequently did so.

7. The Co-Chairmen participated in a ministerial meeting of the Contact Group held in The Hague on 29 May 1995. At that meeting, Ministers of the Contact Group issued a statement in which they once again strongly urged the Bosnian Serb authorities to accept the Contact Group plan as a starting-point for negotiations. They agreed to give a new impetus to the diplomatic process in order to reach a political settlement of the conflict, which they considered as the only possible solution. They supported mutual recognition among the States of the former Yugoslavia. In that respect, they agreed to make a new effort with a view to the earliest possible recognition by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the strengthening of the border closure.

8. On the activities of the International Conference Mission monitoring the closure of the border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and

Montenegro) to the Bosnian Serbs, reference is made to reports that the Co-Chairmen have submitted, through the Secretary-General, to the Security Council, during the first six months of 1995 (see S/1995/6; S/1995/104; S/1995/175; S/1995/255; S/1995/302; S/1995/406 and S/1995/510).

IV. CROATIA

9. Upon the conclusion of the economic agreement of 2 December 1994 (see S/1994/1375), negotiated under the auspices of the Conference, and the subsequent opening of the Zagreb-Lipovac highway on 21 December, the immediate priority of the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee and International Conference negotiators was to expedite the implementation of the remaining provisions of the agreement in cooperation with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). On 9 January 1995, the electricity poles were returned to the Obrovac power plant and the oil pipeline running through Sector North was opened on 27 January. However, the intensive and sustained efforts by the Co-Chairmen and International Conference negotiators over the following weeks to achieve momentum in the implementation were inhibited by a progressive deterioration of the political climate between the Government of Croatia and the Croatian Serb leadership.

10. On 12 January 1995, President Tudjman presented his statement withdrawing consent to UNPROFOR's presence with effect from 31 March 1995. In the situation that followed, the so-called Zagreb Four group (Z-4), which included the Ambassadors in Zagreb of the Russian Federation and the United States of America, along with International Conference participants, presented the "Z-4 plan", on 30 January. It was received by the Croatian Government, but the Croatian Serbs declined to receive it. On 8 February 1995, the Croatian Serb Assembly in Knin decided to freeze all further implementation of the economic agreement as a result of the Croatian Government's withdrawal of consent to the presence of UNPROFOR.

11. After 8 February, it proved increasingly difficult to effect any further implementation of the economic agreement. However, through a constant process of consultation by the Co-Chairmen and International Conference negotiators, in Zagreb, Knin and Belgrade, the text for a joint commercial oil company was finalized and agreed, the signature of which was postponed until the political climate improved. Limited progress was also made towards the opening of the Zagreb-Okucani-Mirkovici railway. Additionally, the first steps towards implementation of a number of water projects were achieved. Most significantly the highway remained in full 24-hour operation and, by mid-April, it was estimated that over 250,000 vehicles had used it.

12. However, on 24 April 1995, the Croatian Serb leadership closed the highway for 24 hours because of claims that the highway was not of equal benefit to the Croatian Serbs. Shortly following its reopening, a series of incidents took place on the highway, after which the situation around the highway deteriorated rapidly. On 1 May 1995, Croatian forces conducted a military offensive in the areas of Sector West under Croatian Serb control.

13. In the wake of this offensive, the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee invited representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Serb leadership to Geneva for talks, in an effort to prevent any further deterioration of the situation and to recommence the negotiating process. Both parties have accepted the invitation in principle. However, the level of military tension and preconditions have precluded such a meeting to date.

14. The Co-Chairmen and International Conference negotiators have approached the two sides once more in an attempt to re-establish a dialogue between the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serb leadership.

V. HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

15. The cessation-of-hostilities agreement signed on 1 January 1995 between the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs was important for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by its mention of the monitoring of human rights as well as commitment to the reopening of civilian traffic across the Sarajevo airport. After initial difficulties encountered in the implementation of the agreement, on 23 January the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs signed an agreement to reopen the routes across Sarajevo airport at the latest by 1 February. In addition to UNHCR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Sarajevo, the local humanitarian organizations Merhamet, Dobrotvor, La Benevolencia, CARITAS and Adra would also be able to use the routes. The agreement also made provision for increased freedom of movement for the people of Sarajevo; further exchanges of prisoners of war in line with the ICRC plan; and medical evacuations from Gorazde and freedom of residence. For the latter, the Bosnian Government agreed to include Bosnian Serb social cases in the evacuation plans.

16. Overall deliveries of aid supplies in Bosnia and Herzegovina were successful at the beginning of the year, with UNHCR land convoys regularly reaching Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica and the eastern enclaves, and with the smooth running of the Sarajevo airlift. UNHCR was consistently able to exceed its monthly target in Sarajevo and elsewhere in central Bosnia in order to create a contingency stock in anticipation of a possible recurrence of obstructions later in the year. Furthermore, it was possible to bring winterization items and fuel to Sarajevo and the eastern enclaves. As an encouraging sign, UNHCR was able for the first time to assist the Bosnian Government to bring the much-needed firewood into Sarajevo over the recently opened "blue routes" across the airport. Arrangements were made with FAO for the distribution of as many seed fertilizers and pesticides as feasible across Bosnia and Herzegovina before the onset of the planting season in March.

17. The subsequent worsening of the overall security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina made movements increasingly difficult. UNHCR staff was denied access to Travnik, Bugojno and Tesanj. The increased sniping incidents in

Sarajevo and the closure, again, of the "blue routes" across Sarajevo airport on 11 March further hampered the humanitarian efforts. The route on Mount Igman became, once more, too dangerous for use by UNHCR vehicles.

18. The airstrikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 25 and 26 May and the ensuing escalation of the conflict and the hostage crisis deeply affected UNHCR's ability to continue to provide assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the point that operations became almost completely blocked in Serb-held territories as well as in the enclaves. The Bosnian Serb authorities stressed that UNHCR activities were considered separate from their disputes with UNPROFOR. However, travel restrictions continued to apply and, in view of the extremely insecure situation, UNHCR cancelled all convoys going over Bosnian Serb-held territory. As a consequence of the reduction of the activities and of the increased security risks, the majority of UNHCR international staff were temporarily removed from Sarajevo, Bihac and Banja Luka.

19. On 15 June, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, cosigned a letter to Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, conveying their profound concern about the developing disasters in Sarajevo, Bihac, Gorazde, Srebrenica and Zepa, calling on the Bosnian Serb leader to honour the commitments made by him over the past three years: "We can no longer tolerate the violation of exhaustively negotiated arrangements or the denial of well developed procedures. We refuse to accept lame excuses, false allegations and suspicions or references to uncontrolled elements to justify interference with free movement of humanitarian goods and staff."

20. During the reporting period, 51 patients were evacuated for medical treatment in third countries, through the joint UNHCR/International Organization for Migration (IOM) medical evacuation programme covering Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thirty patients returned voluntarily upon completion of treatment.

21. In Sarajevo, the detention of a Bosnian Serb UNHCR staff member on 10 February by the Bosnian authorities, and its possible linkage to the release of prisoners held by the Bosnian Serbs, caused a short disruption of the supply movement from the airport to the town. Supplies to the city could be resumed only thanks to the UNPROFOR French battalion that temporarily replaced UNHCR's local drivers pending deployment of an international team from Metkovic. The detained staff member was finally released on 20 March, under a two-for-two exchange between the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs. Following this incident, UNHCR replaced local drivers working at Sarajevo airport with an international team from Metkovic, in view of the limited and dangerous movement of local staff across the checkpoints between the airport and town.

22. Requesting a substantial increase in their current share of humanitarian aid, which is based on assessed need rather than on percentage, the Bosnian Serb authorities introduced a blanket rejection of the weekly Metkovic-Sarajevo convoy plan at the beginning of March. With the introduction of a new Bosnian Serb Coordinating Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, clearance was again obtained for the convoys to proceed as of 18 March.

23. On 8 June, the UNHCR Special Envoy, accompanied by Mr. Akashi, General Janvier and the UNPROFOR Civil Affairs Coordinator for Sarajevo, held discussions with the Bosnian Serb leaders in Pale in order to unblock the renewed standstill in the deliveries of humanitarian supplies by land to Sarajevo. An agreement was finally reached between the Bosnian Serb authorities and UNHCR to resume UNHCR convoys from Metkovic via Kiseljak to both Government- and Bosnian Serb-held parts of Sarajevo, with only one inspection foreseen at checkpoint Sierra 1. Escort would also be provided across Bosnian Serb-held territory to Sarajevo City and Raljovac. This also applied to UNHCR convoys to the Bosnian Serb-held area of Trebinje in south-eastern Bosnia. After initial problems with lengthy administrative procedures, the Bosnian Serb authorities demanded 50 per cent of the deliveries instead of the usual 23 per cent. When clearances were finally obtained under the initial conditions, the convoys were blocked because of the Bosnian Army offensive around Sarajevo. Finally, three food convoys were able to reach the city on 21 June, under the terms of the agreement of 8 June. However, clearances from the Bosnian Serb authorities were again blocked, after two convoys to the Serb-held part of Sarajevo came under shelling when offloading. The humanitarian situation in Sarajevo was critical and an attempt was to be made to bring a convoy into Sarajevo via the Mount Igman road on 30 June, with the assistance of UNPROFOR drivers.

24. A sequence of serious incidents at Sarajevo airport, involving aircraft of ICRC, UNPROFOR and UNHCR, led to the suspension of the humanitarian airlift on 11 March. Flights resumed on 24 March. On 29 March the Sarajevo airlift saw its thousandth day, only to stop a few days later, on 8 April, because of security problems. The airlift remained suspended, and UNHCR had to rely on overland convoys, which were stepped up to cover about 60 per cent of the city needs. However, full access to the capital stopped in the aftermath of the events of 24-25 May, following the serious deterioration of the overall situation in Sarajevo.

25. After a relatively stable humanitarian situation in the eastern enclaves, the situation became increasingly difficult, with repeated obstructions and confiscations. With the introduction of the new Bosnian Serb Coordinating Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, the bulk of the convoy plan to the eastern enclaves was again approved for the week starting 20 March, after disruptions in convoy access of some 80 per cent. Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) was also able to bring medicines to Gorazde and Srebrenica for the first time since November 1994, after the continuing refusal of the Bosnian Serbs to allow the delivery of medical supplies to the enclaves. The medical situation in Gorazde and Srebrenica had become critical - the hospital in Srebrenica was in a position to perform only extremely urgent surgeries and could no longer ensure basic medical care.

26. With the escalation of the conflict in May, the humanitarian situation in the eastern enclaves deteriorated rapidly. The last convoy to reach Gorazde was on 20 May. Because of the difficult food situation, the local authorities collected grain from outlying villages for distribution to vulnerable cases. In Srebrenica, where the situation had become critical, conditions improved somewhat with the arrival of a few convoys. A convoy reached Zepa on 21 June, the first since 24 May.

27. Obstruction from the Croatian Serbs and the Abdic forces continued for the passage of UNHCR convoys to the Bihac pocket, with virtually all supplies blocked since May 1994. The humanitarian situation was critical. On 8 March, the UNHCR Special Envoy wrote to Croatian Serb leader Martic, recalling their meeting in Knin on 21 February and pointing out that, since that meeting, no convoys had been approved for Bihac, with the exception of only four convoys. UNHCR had, therefore, no other choice at the moment but to suspend humanitarian assistance to areas under Croatian Serb control until regular access to Bihac, particularly through the crossing-point at Licko Petrovo Selo, was granted.

28. With the events in Western Slavonia at the beginning of May, the Bihac pocket became even more isolated and chances to get convoys in became even more remote. The last assistance to arrive on 25 May (100 tons of food), in the southern part of the pocket, was distributed to the most vulnerable cases, through hospitals, social centres, public kitchens and the local Red Cross. UNHCR was finally able to deliver a convoy to the southern part of the pocket on 29 June, passing through the checkpoint at Licko Petrovo Selo. A second convoy obtained clearance for the following day.

29. The increased cooperation between the UNCHR, UNPROFOR Civil Affairs and UNHCR on the issue of monitoring of human rights was a positive development and a constant reminder of the necessity of monitoring the continuing forced departure of Muslims and Croats from Banja Luka. UNHCR was concerned about the adverse effects on the security situation and the conduct of its protection activities of the continued acts of violence against minorities in the Banja Luka area. Continuous pressure placed on minority communities to leave the area took the form of evictions, house bombings and midnight shooting raids, arrest and interrogation, telephone calls, veiled threats, harassment on the streets, physical and verbal assaults of women and students. The rounding up of minority men between the ages of 17 and 70 to perform civilian work obligations, often on the first and second front lines, was also of great concern. As a result of the harassment, members of minorities did not venture out of their homes; children did not attend school; and men and boys were in hiding. UNHCR protection officers closely monitored the situation, through field trips and visits to the minorities. UNHCR held numerous meetings with the local authorities, the Catholic Bishop and CARITAS, in its continued efforts to put an end to the situation.

30. In May, the influx of refugees from Western Slavonia into Bosnian Serb-controlled territory, especially in the Banja Luka region, resulted in the worsening of treatment and forced expulsions of Croat and Muslim minorities residing there. UNHCR reported on numerous attacks, especially on the Catholic clergy, and repeatedly intervened, with mixed results, before the authorities to mediate between the two groups. Some 6,000 to 7,000 refugees from Western Slavonia were registered in the Banja Luka area; some 2,100 left Western Slavonia via the UNCRO "Operation Safe Passage"; some 750 were accommodated in collective centres, and the rest in private accommodation.

31. Some 100 Serb and Croat refugees expressed a desire to return to Western Slavonia. Fifty UNHCR cases received permission from the Croatian Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees to return and verbal permission by the Bosnian Serbs. A small group of Croatian Serbs who fled Western Slavonia to Serbia also

expressed their desire to return. The Croatian Government declared that those Croatian Serbs who fled Western Slavonia will be permitted to return, if it was ascertained that they were legally resident in Croatia prior to the 1991 conflict. UNHCR's involvement in the population movements from Western Slavonia after the restoration of Croatian rule was limited to the counselling of the Croatian Serb population about their right to stay or the possibility to leave with the assistance of international organizations. In the latter case, UNHCR ascertained the voluntary nature of such departures. UNHCR also interviewed refugees arriving from Sector West to Banja Luka.

32. UNHCR dismantled the transit refugee camps in the Nepalese and Jordanian battalion camps in former Sector West that had accommodated refugees from northern Bosnia in the past. During the first days of May, the Croatian Army moved the 359 refugees at Pustara (Nepalese battalion) to Daruvar. Subsequently 245 proceeded to the island of Obonjan for collective accommodation, while the balance departed for private accommodation. The remaining 146 refugees at the Jordanian transit camp at Novska were evacuated to Ivanicgrad with the assistance of UNHCR.

33. UNHCR was concerned about the possible difficulties that Muslims fleeing Banja Luka may experience in entering Croatia, since there was no longer the buffer zone of Sector West, where they would have transited pending UNHCR intervention with the Croatian authorities to obtain entry, subject to resettlement. The Croatian Regional Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees in Zagreb confirmed that refugees originally from Serb-held territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be registered if they arrived directly from their village of origin.

34. Some 4,500 Croatian Serbs from Western Slavonia arrived in Sector East, where they were accommodated in 4 locations, in a combination of private houses and collective accommodations. UNHCR carried out a needs assessment for the new arrivals. Principal needs, especially among the elderly, who were accommodated in sparse collective centres, were basic food and non-food items.

35. The Regional Refugee Commissioner in Sector North informed UNHCR that the local police militia insisted that the total number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Sector would be kept to a maximum of 50 at any given time, and that refugees should not remain in the Sector for more than four weeks. UNHCR facilitated a more expeditious entry of refugees in Croatian-controlled territory.

36. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Federal Republic's Commissioner for Refugees prepared plans for the permanent settlement of approximately 200,000 refugees. The plan called for permanent shelters to be built, access to jobs or job training and some type of credit with the national bank for money to support families while they locally integrate. The initial budget foreseen is US$ 800 million. The Government was still unable to provide UNHCR with accurate numbers of refugees living in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) or their places of origin. Plans for the permanent settlements did not mention citizenship rights of refugees.

37. UNHCR plans to finance US$ 400,000 worth of minor repairs to existing buildings accommodating refugees in 1995. The office of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) Commissioner for Refugees presented UNHCR with requests totalling over US$ 1.5 million worth of repairs and renovations for existing centres.

38. The capacity of collective centres in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is approximately 40,000 beds. Until May 1995, refugees used some 60 per cent of these beds. Since June 1995, many of the commercially owned centres refused to accommodate refugees in the hope that rooms could be rented out to paying customers. Refugees were moved into collective centres built or renovated by UNHCR. It is expected that the remaining collective centres will be 80 per cent full by the end of August.

39. UNHCR learned with concern of cases of refugees carrying old Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia passports from Bosnia and Herzegovina being prevented from leaving the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) without an exit visa, including refugees accepted for temporary protection in third countries. UNHCR repeated its request to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) Government for an update on passport rules and regulations.

40. The number of refugees arriving through the reception centres in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) continued to increase. During the first two quarters of 1995, 1,000 and 2,500 persons respectively per month were reported on average.

41. Some 2,500 refugees from Western Slavonia arrived in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). It was estimated that nearly 7,000 refugees from Western Slavonia transited through the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) from Bosnian Serb-held territory to Sector East.

42. UNHCR was concerned about the mobilization in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) of refugees from Croatia for the Croatian Serb army. Recently, this operation also started to target refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina to be drafted in the Bosnian Serb army. UNHCR received hundreds of phone calls from refugees seeking advice. UNHCR voiced its strong protest with the Office of the Serbian Refugee Commissioner, with the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the spokesperson of the Croatian Serbs for this blatant violation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

43. In Slovenia, a draft law on temporary refuge passed the first reading in Parliament. The law proposed positive amendments to improve guarantees for the applicants during the procedure. Pending the adoption of the law, the Office for Immigration and Refugees continued its policy of "wait and see" and delivered mainly negative decisions on entry permissions and registration applications, with the exception of family permissions and permission for medical reasons. Bosnian citizens who received negative replies from the Slovenian Office for Immigration and Refugees were asked to register at the local police in a database including persons present in Slovenia as tourists

They were not issued any documents by the local police stations. UNHCR raised its concern for this category of population, proposing measures for improvement.

44. On 2 June, the Bosnian Government organized the return of some 726 persons from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. UNHCR was not involved in the movements, except for monitoring and reporting purposes, and ensuring that all departures were voluntary. UNHCR also provided assistance on their arrival at collective centres in Jablanica.

45. On 10 March, the Steering Committee of the International Management Group adopted the statute of the Group at a meeting in Geneva. It also adopted the budget, in principle, depending on forthcoming additional cash contributions.

46. The United Nations revised consolidated inter-agency appeal for the former Yugoslavia covering January-December 1995 was issued on 2 June by nine United Nations agencies, for a total of US$ 470 million for humanitarian operations. The UNHCR component is US$ 172 million, to cover the cost of humanitarian aid for a total estimated number of 2,109,500 beneficiaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Contributions as of 30 June include an estimated carryover of US$ 95.6 million; 1995 contributions amount to US$ 39.5 million.

VI. ETHNIC AND NATIONAL COMMUNITIES AND MINORITIES

A. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

47. The Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities has intensified its activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Its endeavours have concentrated mainly on problems of the ethnic Albanians in the Republic. After some talks with representatives of different ethnic Albanian parties in the country, it was possible to assemble members of the three political parties that are represented in Parliament around the same table. Thus, it became possible to continue the Conference-chaired trilateral talks with the Government, which was represented by the Ministers of the Interior, Education and Justice. Since the beginning of the year, there have been altogether five rounds of talks of two days' duration each in Skopje. A sixth round took place in Geneva from 5 to 7 July.

48. In these trilateral talks, a step-by-step approach was followed. One of the issues discussed during the latest rounds of talks was higher education. There, a tense situation had arisen after an attempt to establish a private university in Tetovo with Albanian as the teaching language. Other issues on the agenda of the trilateral talks were certain aspects of elementary and secondary education, parts of the forthcoming law on local self-government, the showing of national symbols and flags and citizenship questions.

49. Some progress on ethnic Albanian requests was achieved. Ethnic Albanians were nominated to the judiciary, to the officer corps and to diplomatic and other important State functions, although the number of those nominated is still below the approximately 23 per cent of the population of the country that is of

Albanian ethnicity. The main Albanian language newspaper now appears daily, thanks to government subsidies. An agreement between the Macedonian Radio and Television and the Swiss and Danish Governments, which was brokered by the Working Group, provides for a tripling of emissions in the Albanian language and for considerable increases in other ethnicities' languages. A similar project is under consideration for the radio. In education, there was a government promise to open, later in 1995, a pedagogical faculty where future ethnic Albanian teachers will, to a certain extent, be trained in their own language.

50. There were also contacts of the Working Group with ethnic Serbs in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, talks with the Turkish ethnic group, in which there was an agreement of principle on trilateral talks along the model of the talks with the ethnic Albanians, and a meeting with Macedonian-speaking Muslims in the Republic. The requests of these groups referred mainly to language, education and religious issues. The Working Group also held five meetings with leaders of three opposition parties. It was received by President Berisha of the Republic of Albania on 30 May in Tirana, where Mr. Berisha declared his full support for the work of the Group.

51. The Working Group, in preparation for the meetings in Skopje, had discussions with the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The Council provided the Working Group with valuable advice on different subjects such as education and local self-government. The cooperation with the Council of Europe was in continuation of similar cooperation in connection with the census that took place a year ago and on which experts of the Council of Europe continue to work.

52. There has also been very close coordination with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner for National Minorities, particularly on university-level education, and with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Former Yugoslavia in Zagreb. When in Skopje, the Working Group had useful discussions with the Force Commander and the Head of Civil Affairs of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP).

B. Croatia

53. The Working Group has paid attention to the position of Serbs living in the areas of Croatia that are controlled by the Government. It held several exchanges of views with the Chief of Staff of the Office of the President of the Republic in Zagreb. There were also meetings with representatives of these Serbs. On one occasion, discussions took place between a delegation of the Working Group and approximately 70 Serbs, among whom various political groups and parties were represented. The aim of these efforts was to offer the good offices of the Conference on problems voiced by the Serbs.

54. On the subject of future relations among ethnic and national communities and minorities in the former Yugoslavia, the Working Group also had contacts with Cabinet Ministers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and was received by Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

C. Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina

55. Renewed efforts were made with a view to re-establishing a dialogue between representatives of non-Serb ethnicities living in these areas and the authorities. In this context, International Conference representatives met on several occasions with representatives of the Kosovo Albanians and of the Sandjak Muslims, as well as with the municipal authorities both in Pristina and in Novi Pazar.

56. The Conference is now studying the possible modalities for dialogue, will continue to be in touch with the parties and will watch future developments closely.

VII. SUCCESSION ISSUES

57. The Succession Issues Working Group has conducted negotiations on all aspects of succession related to the former Yugoslavia. Meticulous and persistent work has brought the parties within reach of agreement on draft treaty provisions dealing with citizenship, pensions, acquired rights, treaty succession and archives. The draft succession treaty has been cast into two portions, which could constitute independent treaties or be parts of a single treaty, depending on how events develop.

58. The first portion deals with citizenship, pensions, acquired rights, archives, treaty succession and arbitration mechanisms. It contains provisions that have been discussed in detail with the parties and on which there is a large measure of agreement. The draft has been given to the parties.

59. The second portion deals with the disposition of assets and liabilities. Consultations are continuing on how these could be distributed among the successor Republics. The Co-Chairmen will decide how to proceed with the second portion in the light of those consultations.

60. During the past six months, consultations with the parties, with major Governments and with creditors have continued on the second portion of the draft treaty. The Chairman of the Working Group hopes for a presentation to the parties as soon as circumstances permit.

VIII. ECONOMIC ISSUES

61. The Economic Issues Working Group was not convened in the first half of the year. The Chairman of the Working Group, together with the heads of delegations, considered that, given the present political circumstances, such a meeting would serve no purpose. The issue of economic reconstruction has been on the agenda of other forums, outside the Group. It is, for instance, the subject-matter of a European Union-supported research project.

IX. ARBITRATION COMMISSION

62. The Arbitration Commission of the International Conference is composed of:

(a) Three members designated by the Council of Ministers of the European Community from among incumbent Presidents of Constitutional Courts existing in States members of the European Community or from among members of the highest courts in those States, it being understood that for the present these members are those from France, Germany and Italy;

(b) One member designated by the President of the International Court of Justice from among former members of the Court or persons possessing the qualifications required by Article 2 of the Statute of the Court;

(c) One member of the European Court of Human Rights, designated by the President of the Court.

63. No two members may have the same nationality. Each member serves as long as he or she holds the office on the basis of which the designation was made.

64. Whenever the Arbitration Commission is engaged in a contentious proceeding, each of the contending parties may appoint an ad hoc member to the Commission, who must either be incumbent members of Constitutional Courts or highest courts existing in States members of OSCE or have the qualification specified in subparagraph 62 (b) or (c) above.

65. The current membership of the Arbitration Commission is as follows:

President: Roland Dumas, President of the Constitutional Council of France (elected on 10 June 1995);

Antonio Baldassarre, President of the Constitutional Court of Italy;

Jutta Limbach, President of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany;

Kéba Mbaye, former Judge at the International Court of Justice;

Elizabeth Palm, Judge of the European Court of Human Rights.

The Arbitration Commission is competent to:

(a) Decide, with binding force for the parties concerned, any dispute submitted to it by the parties thereto upon authorization by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference;

(b) Give its advice as to any legal question submitted to it by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference.